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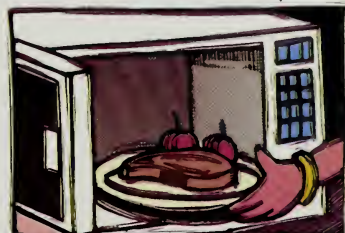
FOOD NEWS

FOR CONSUMERS

Volume 9 Number 3 Holidays 1992

United States Department of Agriculture
Food Safety and Inspection Service

HOW TO TURKEY



with the microwave



quick foods



& help from the kids

FOOD NEWS

Holidays 1992
Vol. 9, No. 3

Food News for Consumers is published by USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service, the agency charged with ensuring the safety, wholesomeness and proper labeling of the nation's meat and poultry supply. The magazine reports how FSIS acts to protect public safety, covering research findings and regulatory efforts important in understanding how the agency works and how consumers can protect themselves against foodborne illness.

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Taking the Strain Out of "Turkey-ing"

A Message from the Meat and Poultry Hotline Manager, Susan Templin Conley

These days it seems the 4th of July is hardly over and it's holiday time again! It rolls around faster each year.

Soon the always-active phone lines on the Meat and Poultry Hotline will light up like holiday streets with calls from folks concerned about preparing the turkey and fixings for holiday parties and gatherings.

Whether the caller is a veteran host or hostess or a first-timer, there is always some anxiety about the safety and quality of food for large holiday meals. So this issue is designed to help put the "fun" back into the fundamentals of safe food preparation.

It's packed with information for all types of food handling situations. We start with the basics of safe turkey preparation. Also, knowing time is always short, we've included articles on how to microwave part of the holiday meal, safe ways to prepare convenience foods and tips on recruiting "young helpers."

Another important article offers vital food safety suggestions for those involved in community dinners, church suppers or other settings where food is served to groups. This is particularly important since many of those reached by charitable efforts are in fragile health, for example the aged and the homeless.

For those calling the Hotline, we've expanded our phone lines this year to help as many callers as possible, and we also have recorded messages on some frequently-asked questions.

So relax. Enjoy this issue and the holiday season.



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Turkey FUNdamentals

by Pat Moriarty, R.D.*

Okay, so it's your turn to host the annual Thanksgiving feast for the entire family. You've known for three years that your time was coming, but the advance warning hasn't increased your comfort level. Aunt Sara has been cooking turkeys for forty years, and Cousin Rachel is a gourmet cook. Can you tackle a turkey without being traumatized?

Believe it or not, taking care of "Tom" isn't that tough. Just follow our "Turkey FUNdamentals" and your bird will turn out fine without a lot of toil and trouble. The experts at USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline say that each November, both novice and experienced cooks have the same basic questions on preparing a turkey. Here are the answers.

How Big a Turkey Should I Buy?

You'll need about one pound per person, or a pound and a half per person if you have hearty eaters or want ample leftovers. If you're having an "open house" and you're not quite sure how much meat you'll need, you could cook and carve an extra bird a few days ahead.

When Should I Buy the Turkey?

While the quality and taste of frozen and fresh turkey are quite similar, the keeping time is not. A frozen turkey can be purchased months in advance, but a fresh bird should be bought only 1 to 2 days ahead.

* Registered Dietitian



What Kind of Turkey Should I Buy?

There are basically two types of raw birds to choose from—a prebasted bird (typical ingredients include vegetable oil, broth, spices) or an unbasted bird to which nothing has been added. Personal preference usually dictates this choice.

USDA Grade A is the highest quality grade for poultry and the one commonly found in stores. Grade A poultry has good shape/structure, fat covering, and is free of pinfeathers and defects such as cuts or bruises.

Is a Tom Better than a Hen?

Age, not gender, is the determining factor for tenderness. All turkeys in the market are young, usually 4-6 months old. A hen generally weighs less than 16 pounds and a tom is usually over 16 pounds.

How Long Will It Take to Defrost a Turkey?

It's best to defrost your turkey in the refrigerator. The rule of thumb is a minimum of 24 hours of defrost time for every 5 pounds of turkey. Thus it can take 4-5 days to defrost a 20-pound turkey. A completely thawed bird will last for an additional 1 to 2 days in the refrigerator once defrosted.

If you need to speed up defrost time, it is safe to defrost the bird in a large utility sink of cold water. Submerge the wrapped bird in cold water. Check or change the water every 30 minutes to make sure the water remains cold. Allow 30 minutes per pound to defrost this way.

How Long Should I Roast the Turkey?

Roughly 15-18 minutes per pound for an unstuffed bird, and 18-24 minutes per pound for a stuffed bird. Have your oven preheated to 325° F.

USDA HIGHLY RECOMMENDS USE OF A MEAT THERMOMETER TO DETERMINE DONENESS. A whole turkey is done when the temperature reaches 180° F in the inner thigh. A breast is done at 170° F. The juices should run clear. Stuffing temperature should reach at least 165° F.

Still, cooking times do vary! Every year people wonder why their turkey is done too early or too late. There are many reasons — oven temperature may not be accurate, the turkey is still partially frozen in center or the roasting pan is too small and heat flow is inhibited.

What Do I Do If the Turkey Is Done an Hour Ahead of Schedule?

It is safe to hold a turkey in the oven at a reduced temperature. First, use a meat thermometer to verify that the bird is done — dark meat has reached 180° F and the stuffing 165° F. Keep the thermometer in the meat. You will need to lower your oven temperature. Start by moving your oven temperature to 200° F. ADJUST THE TEMPERATURE OF THE OVEN TO ASSURE THAT THE TEMPERATURE OF THE TURKEY NEVER DROPS BELOW 140° F. Check meat thermometer at several intervals to assure that 140° F is maintained. Keep the bird covered so it doesn't dry out.

What Do I Do If the Turkey Is Not Done on Time?

About the only thing you can do is keep cooking! You can turn the oven up slightly, or cover the bird tightly

To Keep Things FUN, Not Frantic:

- Decide how much turkey you will need before you shop.
- Get a meat thermometer.
- Make sure you have a roasting pan large enough for your turkey. Or roast 2 small birds versus 1 large bird.
- Allow an adequate number of days to refrigerator-defrost a frozen bird.
- Wash hands, sinks, counters, utensils and platters thoroughly with soap and hot water before and after working with bird.
- Remember to remove the bag of giblets from inside the bird.
- Wash the inside and outside of the turkey in cold water and drain well.
- Stuff right before roasting.
- Place the turkey breast-side up in a shallow roasting pan. You may want to brush with oil or melted margarine.
- Insert meat thermometer in inner thigh.
- Cover loosely with aluminum foil.
- Roast the bird 15-18 minutes per pound for an unstuffed bird, 18-24 minutes per pound for a stuffed bird.
- Remove foil 20-30 minutes before roasting is finished to allow the bird to brown.
- Remove turkey when dark meat reaches 180° F and the stuffing reaches 165° F.
- Allow the cooked turkey to sit for 20 minutes before carving.
- After dinner, carve leftovers from bone and refrigerate promptly. Remember, you only have 2 hours from the time you take the bird from the oven.
- Smile and enjoy!

with a lid if you haven't already done so. Do not keep opening and closing the oven door to baste the bird or check its progress. This will only lower the oven temperature and add to the cooking time.

Can You Roast the Turkey the Day Before?

Yes. In fact, more and more people are taking this route. However, for safety reasons, the cooked bird must be deboned before being refrigerated. The carved meat should be stored in shallow containers. The meat can then be reheated in the regular oven the next

day for approximately 10 minutes per pound. To prevent the meat from drying out, add either the leftover meat drippings, gravy or turkey broth and cover with foil. ❖

For additional questions on cooking your holiday bird, call USDA'S Meat and Poultry Hotline.

Normal hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays, Eastern Time. In November, the hours will be extended to 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Hotline will also be open the weekend before Thanksgiving, Nov. 21 and 22, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. On Thanksgiving Day, the lines will operate 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Call 1-800-535-4555. Washington, D.C. area residents call 202-720-3333.

Planning a Microwave Dinner

by CiCi Williamson, C.H.E.*

A holiday feast is not something you can cook in 30 minutes or less. But with your microwave oven and a little pre-planning, you can micro-"wave" away many holiday cooking hassles.

A day or two before the holiday meal, you can microwave vegetables for casseroles, ingredients for the stuffing, fresh cranberry sauce and desserts. Refrigerate these items. Then on the big day, use them to save cooking time.

But dare you attempt to micro-cook your centerpiece—the big bird? Sure.

Use the microwave for small turkeys—12 to 14 pounds, turkey breasts or parts and boneless turkey. Oversized birds sit too close to the ceiling and cook unevenly. As an alternative, consider microwaving a Cornish game hen.

Micro-Defrosting Poultry

Once you've chosen your bird, the next step (if it's frozen) is to thaw it. If time permits, the best way to thaw poultry is in the refrigerator, which takes a minimum of 1 day per 5 pounds.

It's possible, but not desirable, to micro-defrost a whole turkey. Because microwaves are absorbed by food unevenly, thin parts of the turkey can begin to cook while thick areas are still frozen.

If you choose micro-defrosting, first check your owner's manual for advice and defrosting instructions. Remove the turkey's wrapping and metal clip or tag. Leave in place the hock lock or wire restraining the legs.

You'll have to rotate and turn the bird over several times during defrosting. Use the times recommended in your oven manual or about 6 to 8 minutes per pound on medium-low (30% power). Shield areas which begin to warm by crimping small pieces of aluminum foil over them to prevent cooking.

Use the same procedure to thaw turkey parts, boneless roasts and other poultry or follow package instructions.

After micro-defrosting poultry, cook it immediately.

Micro-Cooking Turkey

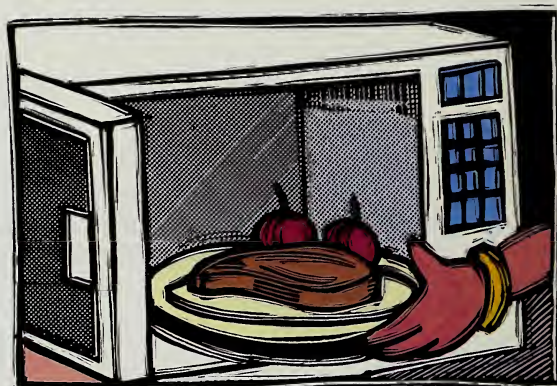
Once the turkey is defrosted, remove the giblets and rinse the bird under cold running water. Pat dry with paper towels.

While it's perfectly safe to microwave stuffing separately in a casserole dish, the USDA does not recommend stuffing a turkey to be microwaved. Foodborne bacteria might survive the shortened cooking time.

Rub the turkey with cooking oil and brown gravy coloring. Then place it in the appropriate size oven cooking bag. These nylon bags assure a moist-heat method that will help prevent uneven cooking.

Close the end of the bag loosely using a strip of plastic wrap or dental floss. Don't make slits in the bag because you'll need to turn the turkey over. Place it in a baking dish breast-side down.

Microwave the turkey on medium power (50% power) 9 to 10 minutes per pound. After half the cooking time,



rotate the dish and turn the turkey breast-side up to finish cooking. Then let it stand 20 minutes.

If your turkey has a pop-up timer, it should indicate doneness at this time. Use a thermometer to be sure the turkey has reached 180° F when checked in several places. Also look for visual signs of doneness. Juices should run clear and the leg joint should move freely. Add cooking time if it hasn't reached this temperature.

To microwave turkey parts, estimate cooking times based on this chart from the National Turkey Federation, (see p. 7.)

To use turkey drippings safely, bring them to a boil, either in the microwave or on top of the stove. To make gravy from the drippings, measure the liquid. Make a paste of 1 tablespoon each of flour and water per cup of liquid. Stir into drippings; heat until thick. Add browning agent if desired.

Precooked Accompaniments

If you've pre-planned and prepared accompaniments to your holiday poultry, dinner's almost ready. While the entree is resting, microwave the accompaniments.

Cooked vegetable casseroles such as mashed potatoes and green vegetables reheat in 1 or 2 minutes per cup on high power or to 160° F.

*Certified Home Economist

Microwaving Turkey Cuts

PART	POWER	TIME (minutes per lb.)
Whole Breast	High (first 1/3 of time) Medium (remaining 2/3 of time)	10 to 15
Breast Half (bone-in)	Medium	11-15
Breast Half (boneless)	High (first 5 minutes) Medium (remaining time)	10 to 15
Breast Tenderloins	Medium-High	11 to 12
Cutlets/Slices	Medium	6 to 8
Drumsticks, Wings & Thighs (bone-in)	Medium-High	13 to 16
Thighs (boneless)	Medium-High	12 to 14

From the National Turkey Federation

Stuffing should not be made ahead of time but ingredients for it can be precooked. Place onion and celery in a glass measure covered with vented plastic wrap. Butter is not needed when micro-sautéing, which eliminates calories from fat. Microwave on high power 2 minutes per cup or until softened. Refrigerate up to 3 or 4 days.

Sausage for stuffing can be microwaved on high power 5 to 6 minutes per pound. Stir or rotate midway through cooking. Drain fat; refrigerate as above.

Measure other ingredients for the stuffing but combine them just before heating on the feast day—about 30 seconds per cup on high or to 160° F. If a brown crust is desired, heat stuffing in a conventional oven for 20 to 30 minutes.

If you're a person who likes warm fruit or nut pies, reheat the prebaked pie according to package directions or

20 seconds per slice. Frozen unbaked pies cannot be microwaved so bake them ahead of time in a conventional oven. Pies in metal pans must be transferred to glass pie plates or microwavable plates for reheating.

After dinner, debone the turkey and return leftovers to the refrigerator within 2 hours after cooking. Store gravy only 1 or 2 days; leftovers, 3 to 4 days. Or freeze the foods for longer storage.

Microwave Giblets

Place turkey neck, gizzard and heart in a 2-quart casserole with 3 cups of water. Cover with lid or vented plastic wrap.

Microwave on medium (50% power) 35 minutes. Add liver, re-cover and microwave on medium 10 minutes. Strain broth to use in making gravy or for moistening stuffing. ♦

Deciding How Long to Microwave Foods

In the microwave, literally every second counts. When recipes give a range of time, such as 8 to 10 minutes per pound, which timing do you use for your oven so food gets cooked safely? This test from the International Microwave Power Institute can help you determine your oven's cooking speed.

Time-to-Boil Wattage Test

From a container of half ice and half water, pour exactly 1 cup of water (no ice) into a 1-cup glass measuring cup. Place in the center of the microwave oven. Heat on high power for 5 minutes or until water begins to boil. If water begins to boil in less than 3 1/2 minutes, consider your oven "high power"; if longer, the oven is "low power."

When using recipes and package directions, set a "high power" microwave oven for the minimum time recommended. If your oven is "low power," it probably will take a longer time. However, always check for proper doneness by using the indicators recipes and packages describe—such as internal temperatures and visual appearance.

Further questions about microwaving turkey? Call the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline. Normal hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays, Eastern Time. In November, the hours will be extended to 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Hotline will also be open the weekend before Thanksgiving, Nov. 21 and 22, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. On Thanksgiving Day, the lines will operate 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Call 1-800-535-4555. Washington, D.C. area residents call 202-720-3333.

Save Time With Convenience Foods???

by Marianne H. Gravely

It's true! Today's markets are full of convenience foods that can take some of the toil out of holiday dinners. Here's how.

Appetizers. Shop the frozen foods section for hors d'oeuvres, then "personalize" them. How about pouring your famous cracked-pepper sauce over prepared frozen meatballs or chicken wings? Or serve a tray of hot mini-meat turnovers with fresh fruit kabobs? You might also marinate supermarket salad bar vegetables and boiled shrimp in a light vinaigrette for the weight watchers.

Today's dairy case offers flavored cream cheeses, gourmet cheeses and ready-to-cook rolls and breadsticks. Try brushing the breadsticks with oil, then roll them in grated parmesan cheese and garlic powder before baking.

Salads. Stop by the store salad bar to create a tossed salad in seconds or choose ingredients for a vegetable tray. Prepare your favorite homemade dressing, or add raisins, apple chunks and poppy seeds to a plain Italian dressing for a salad that complements turkey.

The Turkey. Trying a frozen stuffed turkey? Follow the manufacturer's instructions and cook it from the FROZEN STATE—a time AND space saver!

If you want to stuff your own turkey, save time by combining a prepared rice mix with almonds and chopped vegetables, or combine cornbread crumbs with canned oyster chowder and canned Chinese mixed vegetables. Stuff the turkey just before baking.

Mashed Potatoes and Other Side Dishes. Convert instant mashed potatoes to a tempting side dish by

adding grated cheddar, chives, onion powder and a little milk. Frozen filled pasta shells are terrific boiled and served with fresh sautéed green beans and red pepper slices.

Desserts! A good-quality frozen pie can reach epicurean heights when drizzled with your own hot rum sauce. Or how about icing a yellow box cake with your grandmother's burnt-sugar icing? Another alternative: soak fruit in liqueur and spoon it over a sponge or angel food cake.



Whatever shortcuts you take over the holidays, take the time you've saved to relax and ENJOY YOURSELF. ✦

For additional questions on cooking your holiday bird, call USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline. Normal hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays, Eastern Time. In November the hours will be extended to 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Hotline will also be open the weekend before Thanksgiving, Nov. 21 and 22, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. On Thanksgiving Day, the lines will operate 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Call 1-800-535-4555. Washington, D.C. area residents call 202-720-3333.

Don't Forget Safety!

- Keep hot foods hot, cold foods cold, everything clean and don't leave any food in the DANGER ZONE (between 40° and 140° F) for more than 2 hours!

- Foods containing meat, poultry or dairy products are perishable and must remain refrigerated until you're ready to use them. That includes pumpkin or cream-type pies, and cakes with cream cheese or egg-white icings.

- You CAN leave out for most of the day raw fruits and vegetables, hard cheeses, fruit pies, most cakes (see above) and sweets.

- Save space in your refrigerator by cooking foods from the frozen state. Just cook 1 1/2 times the recommended cooking time.

- DON'T TRY TO SAVE TIME BY STUFFING YOUR TURKEY AHEAD!

- If you're buying a cooked, ready-to-eat turkey, pick it up within 2 hours of serving time.

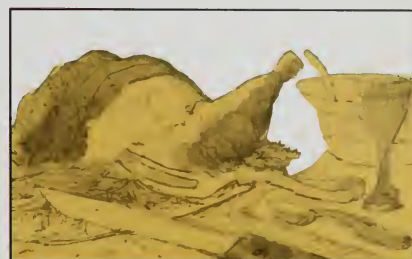
- Finally, put leftovers away as soon as possible.

Taste-Test USDA's New Low-Fat Holiday Recipes

by Jackie Haven and
Nancy Masucci, HNIS*

"This tastes better than stuffing from the bird." "The pie is just like grandma's!" That's the kind of rave reviews we heard on these new lower fat and calorie recipes.

Developed by Nancy Masucci at USDA's Food Research Laboratory in Hyattsville, Md., the recipes also give healthy food preparation tips. Try them with your family.



Savvy Stuffing

Compared to standard stuffing, this version is minus 90 calories, 10 grams of fat, 2 grams of saturated fat and 225 milligrams of sodium per serving. The secret? Cutting added fat, baking separately (no fat drips in from the bird) and using spices to compensate for the low-salt chicken broth.

8 servings, 1/2 cup each

Celery, chopped1 cup
Onion, chopped1/2 cup
Margarine1 T
Bread cubes, soft8 cups
Poultry seasoning1/2 t
Pepper1/8 t
Thyme leaves1/8 t
Chicken broth,3/4 cup
no-added-salt

Preheat oven to 350° F. Cook onions and celery in margarine until tender. Remove from heat. Mix in bread cubes, seasonings and broth. Place in greased 8 x 8 inch baking dish. Cover and bake 1 hour.

Per serving:

Calories120
Cholesterol1 mg.
Total fat3 gm.
Sodium210 mg.
Saturated fatty acids1 gm.

Note: If you're expecting a big crowd, this recipe can easily be doubled.

Low-Fat Turkey Talk

- Pre-basted turkeys are high in fat. Buy a regular bird.
- Baste with broth instead of greasy drippings.
- To keep turkey fat out of the dressing, bake it separately.
- Eat less skin. Three ounces of light turkey meat with skin have 7 grams of fat; without skin, 3 grams of fat. Three ounces of dark meat with and without skin have 10 and 6 grams of fat.



Crowd-Pleasing Pumpkin Pie

Here's a savings of 80 calories, 9 grams of fat, 4 grams saturated fat and 50 milligrams of cholesterol per slice. There's less fat in the crust, less sugar in the filling. Evaporated skim milk and 2 egg whites substitute for whole milk and one egg.

9-inch pie, 8 servings

Pastry:

Flour1 cup
Salt1/4 t
Margarine1/4 cup
Water2 T

Filling:

Pumpkin16 oz.
Evaporated skim milk12 fluid oz.
Egg, beaten1 large
Egg whites2 large
Sugar1/4 cup
Brown sugar1/4 cup
Flour2 T
Pumpkin pie spice2 t
Salt1/4 t

Preheat oven to 375° F. Mix flour and salt. Mix in margarine until dough forms pea-sized balls. Add water; mix until just moistened. Roll out dough on lightly floured surface. Line 9-inch pie pan with pastry. Mix filling ingredients well; pour into shell. Bake 1 hour or until knife put in center comes out clean.

Per serving:

Calories235
Cholesterol28 mg.
Total fat7 gm.
Sodium295 mg.
Saturated fatty acids1 gm.

Note: Two tablespoons of light whipped topping will add 5 calories and 1 gram of fat.



Taking Potluck Shouldn't Mean Taking Chances—

Safe-Food Rules for Church and Community Suppers

by Mary Ann Parmley

Too often you see the headlines: "17 Sick After Church Dinner," "Home for the Aged Stricken."

"Outbreaks of foodborne illness often result from insufficient refrigeration of food," said Dr. Nancy Bean who tracks foodborne illness at the national Centers for Disease Control, Atlanta.

"Many problems could be avoided if people would follow a few simple rules," Dr. Bean continued. "It's important since many people served by community outreach programs—the elderly and the homeless, for example—are more susceptible to foodborne illness."

How can you keep bacterial contamination out of your group's well-intentioned efforts? Here are answers to some group meal questions people have asked our Meat and Poultry Hotline.

Q I'm in charge of the lasagna supper for the Church Seniors Night. A grocer and caterer are donating the food. I have 10 helpers. What's the best way to do this safely?

A Presumably you'll be getting ground beef, cheese, canned and fresh vegetables. Ask your donors to freeze the meat in 10 packets for your volunteers. The cheese should just be kept refrigerated.

Suggest to your cooks that they make the trays of lasagna a day or so before the event and freeze them. They can defrost the casseroles in the refrigerator the afternoon before the dinner and you can heat them for serving that night. Make sure the casseroles are heated so the juice is bubbling through.



Q My men's group at the Temple is baking chicken parts for a homeless shelter. The shelter can't take the food until late in the day, but people drop the prepared chicken at the Temple on their way to work in the morning. Our refrigerator is often too full to hold everything. What can I do?

A This is a common problem. Any cooked perishable food should only remain at room temperature 2 hours; 1 hour in hot weather. Therefore

the men can either refrigerate the chicken at work and drop it off on their way home or leave early, take the chicken from home refrigerators and then to the Temple.

Q My Women's Circle is doing a cookbook to raise money for the new daycare center. Many of our favorite recipes use raw eggs. How can we update them?

A You are right to be concerned. The bacteria *Salmonella enteritidis* can make you sick if you use a contaminated raw egg. Therefore you should ask a local dietitian or home economist at your local agricultural college or Extension Service to review the recipes.

Generally, we advise people now to use a cooked base for ice creams and custards. The base should reach 160° F and coat a spoon. You can substitute commercial pasteurized egg mixes or egg substitutes in recipes where cooking won't work. ALWAYS keep eggs refrigerated and cook eggs until both yolk and white are firm. For more details, write for a FREE copy of the FSIS-Egg Handling Handbook, Rm. 1165-South Bldg., Wash., D.C. 20250.

Q Our Neighborhood Watch group throws an annual chili supper. We cook the chili the day before and refrigerate it overnight in the aluminum cooking pots. What about Alzheimer's and aluminum?

A There is no proof that aluminum cookware contributes to Alzheimer's disease. But unpleasant taste changes can occur when food is stored in metal cookware. Plus, there is the real safety problem of slow cool-down when food is refrigerated in over-large containers. Large portions of food should be divided into smaller containers for quick cooling.

Q I think our lodge cooks are doing pretty well handling perishable foods. But what about the raw vegetables for salads and desserts that sit out?

A Good question. Many people who are concerned about raw meat and poultry today forget that *everything* in the kitchen must be handled properly to avoid foodborne illness.

While some harmful organisms occasionally show up on produce in this country, most of the problems occur when foodborne bacteria from raw meat, poultry, eggs or fish are unintentionally spread to food served uncooked—like salad.

Get it to the Church on Time

1. Inspect donated food - Make sure bulk food supplies are safe when you get them. When possible, ask suppliers to send you raw meats and poultry already frozen. Distribute it to volunteer cooks frozen.

2. Keep perishables refrigerated before use. Normally, perishables are only safe off refrigeration up to 2 hours. After use, put unused leftovers in small containers. Most perishable leftovers last only a few days.

3. Use meat thermometers when you cook. Red meat should reach 160° and poultry 180° F. When you can only "eyeball" it, red meat should be cooked thoroughly, poultry juices should run clear and fish should flake to the fork.

4. Keep everything as clean as possible. Remind helpers to wash their hands in hot, soapy water before starting food preparation. Hands, utensils and cutting boards should also be washed between raw meat and fish preparation and preparing other foods.

5. Ask volunteer cooks to freeze food prepared at home before dropping it off at the community kitchen. This is especially important if they drop things off a bit early. Then defrost casseroles in the microwave just before popping them in the oven.

6. Safe serving - When replenishing food served family style, use medium-sized clean bowls filled with piping hot food. Discard any food left in previous bowls. Too many people may have had their hands in it, or sneezed or coughed over it.

7. Carry-out meals - Meals taken to shut-ins or taken home by people should be either piping hot or refrigerator-cold. Piping hot dinners should be eaten within 2 hours. Refrigerator-cold food, of course, should be reheated within 2 hours.

8. Need more refrigerator space? Consider adding another refrigerator to your group kitchen. It may not sound exciting, but it's vital. After all, you want to keep everybody well.

There's a simple solution. Wash your hands and utensils in hot, soapy water after handling raw meats, and wash the cutting board and knife after preparing raw meat and before chopping salad items. You might also consider getting a second cutting board just for salads or chopping your salad items first.

Cooked vegetables, too, are perishable and should never sit out over 2 hours.

Most fruit pies can sit at room temperature for several hours. Custard, cream or meringue-topped desserts, however, should never be off refrigeration over 2 hours.

Q I have to roast several turkeys in cooking bags to take to church tomorrow. To save time, can I partially cook the birds today and refrigerate them overnight in the bags? I could finish cooking them and take them to church warm tomorrow.

A No, it's never safe to partially cook anything. Any bacteria present will just warm up to temperatures

where they can start growing. They may not be killed by partial cooking.

Second, refrigerating the whole birds—especially since the bags would insulate and cause them to take longer to cool down—gives bacteria another period in which to grow. Completing the cooking the next day might not kill the total bacteria or bacterial poisons then present. Many common foodborne bacteria can double in number every 20 minutes at temperatures between 40° and 140° F.

Completely cook the turkeys in the bags. Debone them and refrigerate the meat overnight in smaller containers. Reheat for serving the following day. ❖

-Research assistance from Marilyn Johnston, Diane Van

FOR FURTHER QUESTIONS on bulk food preparation, call USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline, 1-800-535-4555. Washington, D.C. area residents dial 202-720-3333.

TURKEY BASICS FROM USDA

BUYING A TURKEY

FROZEN	FROZEN PRE-STUFFED	FRESH	PRE-COOKED
Buy any time but keep frozen until 1-5 days before cooking. (See THAWING)	Buy any time. Keep frozen until ready to cook. DO NOT THAW.	Buy 1-2 days before cooking. DO NOT BUY PRE-STUFFED.	Bring the turkey home and serve within 1-2 hours.
1 lb. per person	1-1/4 lbs. per person	1 lb. per person	1 lb. per person

THAWING A TURKEY

THAWING TIME IN THE REFRIGERATOR (40° F)	THAWING TIME IN COLD WATER	THAWING IN THE MICROWAVE
Roughly 24 hours per 5 pounds (Whole Turkey)	Roughly 30 minutes per pound (Whole Turkey)	Check manufacturer's instructions for the size turkey that will fit into your oven, the minutes per pound and the power level to use for thawing. Cook immediately after thawing.
8 to 12 pounds 1 to 2 days	8 to 12 pounds 4 to 6 hours	
12 to 16 pounds 2 to 3 days	12 to 16 pounds 6 to 8 hours	
16 to 20 pounds 3 to 4 days	16 to 20 pounds 8 to 10 hours	
20 to 24 pounds 4 to 5 days	20 to 24 pounds 10 to 12 hours	
	(Change water every 1/2 hour)	

After thawing, remove neck and giblets, wash turkey inside and out with cold water, drain well. Defrosted turkey may remain in refrigerator 1-2 days.

WASH HANDS, UTENSILS, SINK AND ANYTHING ELSE THAT HAS CONTACTED RAW TURKEY.

STUFFING A TURKEY

STUFFING IN THE TURKEY	STUFFING SEPARATE
Mix and stuff ingredients immediately before putting in oven. Stuff lightly. Cooking time takes longer. Allow 3/4 cup stuffing per lb./turkey.	If you are in a hurry, bake stuffing in a greased, covered baking dish at 325° F for 45-60 minutes or until heated to 165° F.

ROASTING A TURKEY

Timetable for Fresh or Thawed Turkey at 325° F

WEIGHT (pounds)	UNSTUFFED (hours)	STUFFED (hours)
4 to 6 (breast)	1-1/2 to 2-1/4	Not Applicable
6 to 8	2-1/4 to 3-1/4	3 to 3-1/2
8 to 12	3-1/4 to 4	3-1/2 to 4-1/2
12 to 16	4 to 4-1/2	4-1/2 to 5-1/2
16 to 20	4-1/2 to 5	5-1/2 to 6-1/2
20 to 24	5 to 5-1/2	6-1/2 to 7
24 to 28	5-1/2 to 6-1/2	7 to 8-1/2

Place turkey breast-side up on a rack in a shallow roasting pan. Insert meat thermometer in thigh. Do not add water. Cover turkey with loose tent of heavy-duty aluminum foil. Remove foil 20-30 minutes before roasting is done. Final temperature for safety and doneness—180° F in thigh; 165° F in stuffing. Juices should be clear not pink.

WHEN TURKEY IS DONE REMOVE STUFFING. LET BIRD STAND 20 MINUTES FOR BETTER CARVING. THEN SERVE SLICED TURKEY AND STUFFING.

STORING YOUR LEFTOVERS

Debone turkey and refrigerate all leftovers in small, shallow containers. Use leftover turkey and stuffing within 3-4 days; gravy within 1-2 days, or freeze these foods.

OTHER QUESTIONS ON YOUR HOLIDAY TURKEY?

If you have questions about your holiday turkey, call the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-800-535-4555. Washington, D.C. area residents call 202-720-3333.

Hours: Monday-Friday, Nov. 2-30, 9 to 5 EST
Saturday - Sunday, Nov. 21-22, 9 to 5 EST

Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 26, 8 to 2 EST
Monday-Friday, Year-round, 10 to 4 ET

Holiday Helpers

by Laura Fox



While few of today's cookie monsters will actually become tomorrow's pastry chefs, most children are intensely interested in food. It's one of their greatest pleasures.

Phylliss Dennee, a nutrition education expert with the Montana State University Extension Service, said, "Children love learning to cook when parents can take time with the project. Fixing their own food develops self-esteem and helps many fussy eaters accept new foods."

No two children are alike developmentally, however, so cooking activities must be tailored to each child. Safe food handling practices, of course, are important for all age groups. See starred (★) instructions.

All Ages

- ★ Wash hands in hot, soapy water before beginning food preparation.
- ★ Wash hands, utensils and counter surfaces after handling raw meat, poultry or fish and before preparing other foods.
- ★ Keep the kitchen clean.
- ★ Make sure perishable foods are never off refrigeration over 2 hours.

2 1/2-3 Year Olds

- Wash fruits and vegetables
- Peel bananas
- Stir batters
- Slice soft foods with table knife (cooked potatoes, bananas)
- Pour
- Fetch cans from low cabinets
- Spread with a knife (soft onto firm)
- Use rotary egg beater (for a short time)
- Measure (e.g., chocolate chips into 1 cup measure)

4-5 Year Olds

- Grease pans
- Open packages
- Peel carrots
- Set table (with instruction)
- Shape dough for cookies/hamburger patties - *Caution children not to put their hands in their mouths while handling raw hamburger meat. It can carry harmful bacteria. They should wash hands after shaping patties.
- Snip fresh herbs for salads or cooking
- Wash and tear lettuce for salad, separate broccoli, cauliflower
- Place toppings on pizza or snacks

6-8 Year Olds

- Take part in planning part of or entire meal
- Set table (with less supervision)
- Make a salad
- Find ingredients in cabinet or spice rack
- Shred cheese or vegetables
- Garnish food
- Use microwave, blender or toaster oven (with previous instruction)
- Measure ingredients
- Present prepared food to family at table
- Roll and shape cookies

9-12 Year Olds

- Depending on previous experience, plan and prepare an entire meal

For Further Reading:

Bee, Helen, *The Developing Child*, Harper and Row, 1985.

Activities provided by Phylliss M. Dennee, Nutrition Education Specialist, Montana State University Extension Service

Accurate Nutrient Labeling Is "In the Bottle"

Dr. Wayne R. Wolf of the U.S. Department of Agriculture carries two small bottles of a tan-colored powder with him to professional meetings these days. The powder represents the total American diet.

"The bottle's contents—known officially as Standard Reference Material 1548 (SRM 1548)—will be one of the 'gold standards' for food analysis when the 1993 food labeling regulations requiring nutrient labeling of most packaged foods go into effect," said Dr. Wolf, a research chemist with the Agricultural Research Service in Beltsville, Md.

Laboratories analyzing foods needed a primary food standard against which to check their values so researchers with ARS, FDA and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) developed SRM 1548. NIST certified the powder for concentrations of 13 essential trace elements and values for fat, fiber, ash, calories and Kjeldahl nitrogen—a measure of protein content.

"SRM 1548 is the first in what hopefully will be several reference materials available for food labeling," said Dr. James T. Tanner, chief of FDA's Nutrient Surveillance Branch and the co-developer of SRM 1548.

After a company tests the nutritive value of one of its food products, it can judge whether its own analytical procedures are correct by validating them against a known reference material, such as SRM 1548.

For further details, contact Wayne R. Wolf, (301) 504-8927 or James T. Tanner, (202) 205-5364.

—Liz Lapping

Pasta Problem—Homemade Noodles With Raw Eggs?

The Meat and Poultry Hotline is repeatedly asked by consumers how safe it is to prepare homemade noodles containing whole raw eggs.

Bessie Berry, a Hotline home economist, said it is safe to prepare homemade noodles following one of these two methods.

First, you can make soft, homemade noodles using your favorite egg recipe. Let the noodles stand for an hour and then cook them.

Or you can prepare the noodles, let them dry for a few hours on the counter and then cook them thoroughly.

"This is perfectly safe," said Berry, "because the noodles are dry to begin with and then you are cooking them thoroughly for your recipe."

Berry cautions that if you let the homemade noodles dry—and they won't be cooked the same day—they should be stored in the refrigerator to prevent *S. enteritidis* or some other foodborne pathogens from growing to disease-causing levels.

"Soft noodles are also ideal for stuffed pasta recipes like manicotti and ravioli," said Berry. "The important thing here, of course, is not to let the stuffed noodles stand around. Either cook them immediately or refrigerate them."

—Herb Gantz

Call Volume On USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline Shows Steady Growth in 1990-91

Since 1985, consumers have turned to USDA's tollfree Meat and Poultry Hotline for answers to their food safety questions. Data collected between October 1, 1990, and December 31, 1991, shows continued growth in the Hotline's popularity. For the period, use of the 800 number rose 10 percent.

The call mix of the 1990s looks much as it has all along—questions far outnumbered complaints, and most callers asked very basic questions about safe food handling. Some interesting new trends did emerge, however. Here are the highlights.

Sending safe food gifts to our troops in the Persian Gulf. November 1990 was the busiest month in Hotline history. In addition to the usual questions on the safe preparation of holiday foods, there were hundreds of calls on how to get food gifts to troops serving in the Persian

Gulf. By the time the Gulf War ended, more than 1,900 callers had learned how to select, package and send foods the safest way possible.

Nutrition questions. Callers became increasingly interested in the changes the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act of 1990 will make in packaged foods. To better explain the labels of the future, the Hotline made nutrition education part of its mission. In October 1991, staff began to answer very basic nutrition questions on meat and poultry. Callers who need diet counseling are advised to contact a health care professional.

Bacteria in the news. In 1991, two pathogens of growing importance to those who study foodborne illness, *Campylobacter jejuni* and *Listeria monocytogenes*, made headlines. As a result, questions to the Hotline about these foodborne bacteria increased in number. *Campylobacter*, in particular, was the subject of many media reports, and more than 900 callers turned to the Hotline to assess this problem.

Who called and what did they ask? Most Hotline callers wanted information. Fewer than 2 percent of all contacts were complaints. Seventy-five percent of all inquiries were basic questions about foodborne illness and the storage, handling, and preparation techniques that can be used to avoid it. Turkey was the subject of 24 percent of all queries, finishing ahead of chicken, beef, eggs and pork.

Consumers were the main users of the Hotline, although significant numbers of business and professional people, including Cooperative Extension agents, took advantage of the service. An estimated 16 to 20 percent of callers were men. Twenty-two percent of the callers were repeat customers. Residents of New York, California and Florida called most often.

For more information. To learn more about the Meat and Poultry Hotline, contact Susan Conley, Manager, at 202-690-0351. Consumers with food safety questions should call the Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-800-535-4555. In the D. C. metro area, the number is 202-720-3333.

—Linda Burkholder

ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS

The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) investigates violations of federal meat and poultry inspection laws.

Those products found in violation can be seized, detained or voluntarily recalled. Companies that violate the law are subject to criminal, administrative or civil penalties. Here are some recent actions:

PRODUCT: Beef products.
COMPANY: C.D. Moyer Co., Philadelphia, Pa.
VIOLATION: Sale and distribution of product labeled as beef that contained chicken and pork, and mail fraud by billing customers for the mislabeled product.
ACTION: The firm was fined \$675,400 and the firm's secretary/operator was fined \$200,100 for a total of \$875,500.

PRODUCT: Ham products.
COMPANY: Sandy Mac Food Co., Pennsauken, N.J.
VIOLATION: Offering bribes to USDA inspectors, adulterating ham products with excessive water and falsifying records.
ACTION: The firm and its former officials have been fined a total of \$2 million. In addition, Merton Zitin, former president and other family members were sentenced to 6 months in jail or 6 months at a half-way house.

PRODUCT: Processed beef and poultry products.
COMPANY: Lite Food Co., Inc., Dallas, Tex.
VIOLATION: Unlawful use of federal inspection mark on labels. The company did not have a Federal "Grant of Inspection."
ACTION: Firm fined \$5,400. Also, Michael Jacobson, former corporate officer, was placed on 5 years' probation, ordered to serve 300 hours of community service and to attend group counseling.

PRODUCT: Beef cuts.
COMPANY: Frank's Foods, Inc., Commerce, Calif.
VIOLATION: Intentional misbranding and the sale and transportation of misbranded products.
ACTION: John Frank, owner, fined \$30,000, sentenced to 30 days in jail on 15 consecutive weekends and to perform 2,500 hours of community service. Also placed on 5 years' probation.

PRODUCT: Ground beef.
COMPANY: H & G Meats, Inc., College Park, Md.
VIOLATION: Selling ground beef adulterated with lamb trimmings with intent to defraud.
ACTION: Inspection service withheld indefinitely. Firm fined \$71,660. Gary Hirschler, the firm's president, and Hayward Miller, the firm's vice-president, were fined \$5,025 each and placed on probation for 2 years.

PRODUCT: Various meat products.
COMPANY: Nick's Alpha-Omega Foods, San Francisco, Calif.
VIOLATION: Holding adulterated products which had become infested with rodents.
ACTION: The firm was fined \$20,000, placed on 2 years' probation and agreed to maintain a program of pest control. The product in question was destroyed.

PRODUCT: Ground beef.
COMPANY: Titangel Abattoir, Inc., Canovanao, Puerto Rico.
VIOLATION: Preparing, selling and transporting 300 pounds of adulterated and misbranded ground beef that contained pork.
ACTION: Luis Hernandez Rivera, owner and president, fined \$6,000, a \$150 special assessment and placed on two years' probation.

PRODUCT: Various meat products.
COMPANY: Almacen Manuel Rosa E Hijos, Inc., Hatillo, Puerto Rico.
VIOLATION: Offering swine carcasses for sale that had not been federally inspected and causing 3,745 pounds of federally inspected meat products to become adulterated with foreign materials.
ACTION: Firm fined \$8,000 and Manuel Rosa Toledo, corporate officer, fined \$1,000.

—Herb Gantz

In Our Winter Issue

An INSIDE Look at the New Nutrition Labels



Soon nearly all packaged food will have a nutrition label. This covers everything from applesauce to chicken noodle soup to ice cream. But you can only benefit from the new labels if you know how to *interpret* them for the diet and health information you need. So

- We'll walk you through the new label format
- We'll define terms like "light," "reduced" and "fresh"
- We'll explain what those new claims about food and health mean and
- We'll explain how the new labels can help you follow our national dietary guidelines on controlling weight, fat and cholesterol and boosting your intake of vegetables, fruits and grains.

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